



**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**National Park Service**

**[N7203; NPS-WASO-NAGPRA-NPS0042935; PPWOCRADN0-PCU00RP14.R50000]**

**Notice of Inventory Completion: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Lincoln National Forest, Alamogordo, NM**

**AGENCY:** National Park Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Lincoln National Forest has completed an inventory of human remains and associated funerary objects and has determined that there is a cultural affiliation between the human remains and associated funerary objects and Indian Tribes or Native Hawaiian organizations in this notice.

**DATES:** Repatriation of the human remains and associated funerary objects in this notice may occur on or after [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE **FEDERAL REGISTER**].

**ADDRESSES:** Send written requests for repatriation of the human remains and associated funerary objects in this notice to Jason Freeman, Forest Supervisor, Lincoln National Forest, 3463 Las Palomas Road, Alamogordo, NM 88310, email *Jason.Freeman2@usda.gov*.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** This notice is published as part of the National Park Service's administrative responsibilities under NAGPRA. The determinations in this notice are the sole responsibility of the Lincoln National Forest, and additional information on the determinations in this notice, including the results of consultation, can be found in its inventory or related records. The National Park Service is not responsible for the determinations in this notice.

**Abstract of information available**

Human remains representing, at least, 10 individuals have been identified. The approximately 102 associated funerary objects include faunal remains, pottery sherds, sticks, sandals, sandal fragments, nets, strings, cordage, scrapers, knives, comingled soil, mats, lithics,

fragments of an unspecified material, ropes, burial wrappings, pieces of charred woven baskets, wooden tools, rabbit fur robe fragments, and miscellaneous items (one or more each of the following: tassel, prayer stick or Paho fragment, gourd fragment, awl, loop Yucca, stone, bowl, bead ornament, sotol stalk, rabbit skin blanket fragment, small bundle containing reed, fur, feathers, and cordage).

These ancestors and funerary objects were removed from Site LA538, Last Chance Canyon Burial Cave, in Eddy County, New Mexico. They were excavated between 1929 and 1932 by Dr. E.B. Howard with the University of Pennsylvania and Harry P. Mera with the New Mexico Laboratory of Anthropology. They were then curated at the Museum of New Mexico (subsequently divided between the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture, Santa Fe and the Maxwell Museum, University of New Mexico), the Carlsbad Museum and Art Center, and the University of Pennsylvania Museum. It is not known whether potentially hazardous substances were used to treat the ancestors and funerary items.

### **Cultural affiliation**

Based on the information available and the results of consultation, cultural affiliation is reasonably identified by the geographical location or acquisition history of the human remains and associated funerary objects described in this notice.

### **Determinations**

The Lincoln National Forest has determined that:

- The human remains described in this notice represent the physical remains of 10 individuals of Native American ancestry.
- The approximately 102 objects described in this notice are reasonably believed to have been placed intentionally with or near individual human remains at the time of death or later as part of the death rite or ceremony.
- There is a connection between the human remains and associated funerary objects described in this notice and the Mescalero Apache Tribe of the Mescalero Reservation, New Mexico and the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo.

### **Requests for Repatriation**

Written requests for repatriation of the human remains and associated funerary objects in this notice must be sent to the authorized representative identified in this notice under ADDRESSES. Requests for repatriation may be submitted by:

1. Any one or more of the Indian Tribes or Native Hawaiian organizations identified in this notice.

2. Any lineal descendant, Indian Tribe, or Native Hawaiian organization not identified in this notice who shows, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the requestor is a lineal descendant or an Indian Tribe or Native Hawaiian organization with cultural affiliation.

Repatriation of the human remains and associated funerary objects described in this notice to a requestor may occur on or after [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE **FEDERAL REGISTER**]. If competing requests for repatriation are received, the Lincoln National Forest must determine the most appropriate requestor prior to repatriation. Requests for joint repatriation of the human remains and associated funerary objects are considered a single request and not competing requests. The Lincoln National Forest is responsible for sending a copy of this notice to the Indian Tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations identified in this notice and any other consulting parties.

**Authority:** Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, 25 U.S.C. 3003, and the implementing regulations, 43 CFR 10.10.

Dated: May 29, 2026.

**Melanie O'Brien,**

*Manager, National NAGPRA Program.*

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